



ANTECHINUS APICALIS.

J. Gould and H. C. Richter del. et lith.

Hallman del. & Walton Imp.

ANTECHINUS APICALIS.

Freckled Antechinus.

Phascogale apicalis, Gray, Ann. and Mag. Nat. Hist., vol. ix. p. 518.

Antechinus apicalis, List of Mamm. in Brit. Mus. Coll., p. 99.

Marn'-dern, Aborigines in the neighbourhood of Moore's River.

Wy'-a-lung, Aborigines of Perth.

Dib'-bler, Aborigines of King George's Sound.

THIS animal is very generally distributed over every part of the colony of Western Australia, where it inhabits trees of various kinds, from the prostrate trunk of the once patriarchal gum of the dense forest to the living grass-trees of the more open districts. Mr. Gilbert's notes comprise all that is at present known of its habits, and these I give in his own words :—" The nest of this animal and the situation in which it is placed appear to vary in different parts of the country. The aborigines in the neighbourhood of Moore's River agree in stating that it is placed in a slight depression of the ground beneath the overhanging leaves of the *Xanthorrhæa* ; on the other hand, the natives around Perth assured me that they always captured the animal either in a dead stump or among the grasses of the *Xanthorrhæa* ; at King George's Sound it appears to differ from both the preceding, for there the natives always pointed out as the nest of this species, a raised structure of fine twigs and coarse grass, very closely resembling that of the common *Perameles*. The stomachs of those I dissected contained the remains of insects of various kinds. While at King George's Sound, I obtained a female with seven young attached ; they were little more than half an inch in length, quite naked and blind. Above the mammae of the mother is a very slight fold of skin, from which the long hairs of the under surface spread downwards and effectually cover and protect the young. The fold in the skin of the abdomen is the only approximation to a pouch that I have found in any member of this genus. The young are very tenacious of life ; those above mentioned lived nearly two days, attached to the mammae of the dead mother ; and after being immersed in spirits of wine continued in motion for nearly two hours."

The sexes are precisely alike in colour ; but the female is somewhat the smaller.

This little animal may be thus described :—All the upper surface reddish brown, interspersed with numerous longer hairs, which are black in the centre and white at the tip, giving the animal a peculiarly grizzled appearance ; flanks and under surface buffy grey ; outside of the fore and hind legs rufous ; tail similar to the upper surface, passing into black at the tip which terminates in a fine point, whereas at the base it is thicker and the hairs more lengthened than in any other species of the genus ; the hairs are also of a more stiff and wiry character.

The Plate represents both sexes of the natural size.